GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2079
ANSWERED ON:02.12.2002
IMPACT OF ASIAN BROWN HAZE
SUBODH MOHITE

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether impact of Asian Brown haze as reported by UNEP has been exaggerated;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the scientists of Indian Institute of Sciences have examined and assessed the impact of this brown haze on Indian environment;

(d) if so, the details of their findings; and

(e) the suggestions made by them to create awareness among people about pollution and harmful emission in the cities?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T .R. BAALU)

(a) & (b) An international collaborative study `Indian Ocean Research Experiment (INDOEX)` has indicated haze over the Indiar Ocean.. The haze is not a permanent feature of the atmosphere over the Asian region and the surrounding seas. It occurs only during January -March, the season in which INDOEX observations were made in 1999. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has, this year, brought out a report entitled `The Asian Brown Cloud: Climate and other Environmental Impacts` based on INDOEX. The press release of the UNEP launching the said report paints an alarming picture of the impacts of this haze on both regional and global scales. However, most of the concerns expressed therein are not well substantiated by reliable modeling studies or experimental observations.

(c) to (e) Prof. J. Srinivasan and Sulochana Gadgil of Centre for Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore have analysed the UNEP report and its press release in their article entitled `Asian Brown Cloud- Fact and Fantasy` published in Current Science, Volume 83, Number 5, dated 10th September, 2002. Both the scientists find that the UNEP press release is a blend of observations and scientifically sound deductions on the one hand and sensational statements with little scientific basis on the other and advocate caution accordingly. The existing legal and policy framework, supported by several initiatives to protect and improve the environment including raising awareness among people, addresses the concerns of pollution in India.